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April is Child Abuse Prevention Month

Children of all ages and races are vulnerable to abuse. According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, protective agencies across the nation receive more than 50,000 reports of suspected child abuse or neglect each week. On average, four children die each day from abuse and neglect.



Your neighbors, grandchildren, clients – all could be at risk. By keeping a watchful eye, you could help save the life of a child. As professionals committed to the service and protection of Kentucky citizens, it is our job to report any suspected abuse.

You can report suspected child abuse by calling the child abuse prevention hot line at (800) 752-6200.

Here are things to look for if you suspect a child is being physically abused.

Signs of Physical Abuse

Consider the possibility of physical abuse when the child:

- ◆ Has unexplained burns, bites, bruises, broken bones or black eyes.
- ◆ Has fading bruises or other marks noticeable after an absence from school.
- ◆ Seems frightened of the parents and protests or cries when it is time to go home.
- ◆ Shrinks at the approach of adults.
- ◆ Reports injury by a parent or another adult caregiver.

Consider the possibility of physical abuse when the parent or other adult caregiver:

- ◆ Offers conflicting, unconvincing or no explanation for the child's injury.
- ◆ Describes the child as "evil," or in some other very negative way.
- ◆ Uses harsh physical discipline with the child.
- ◆ Has a history of abuse as a child.

CHFS Focus Employee Spotlight: Social service workers see job as rewarding

By Anya Armes Weber

The CHFS Focus continues its spotlight of cabinet social services workers this week.

To clarify, not all staff featured here or in last week's profile have social work degrees or licenses. They are social services workers who help families, adults and children become safe and work toward self-sufficiency. Some have social work degrees while some have studied other fields.

Here is a final batch of our social service workers' own thoughts about their jobs. Thanks to all who responded.

Denise Hillis-Torian, Christian County

Working for the cabinet as a social worker has its trials and tribulations, which allow me to examine my own thoughts and feelings about the work. I believe we are the most important tool that we bring to our clients, coworkers, friends and family. Soul-searching gives me the opportunity to address my personal barriers to achieving my personal and professional goal of being a light in a dark world. I am blessed to be about the business of helping others because it is my calling, and I get monetary and fringe benefits at the same time!



Katrina Witten, Franklin County

There is no typical day for a cabinet social worker. You never know what case you're going to be faced with next. I go to schools, homes, centers and day cares. I go to the city and way out in the country to see clients. I never know what is behind that door or how people will look at me.

There are several lessons and skills I have learned and use to do my job well. I have learned that you have to look at the entire picture of the family and the family's makeup. I have learned how to try to calm clients when they are upset about allegations or situations.

The greatest reward of my job is seeing a family live together in a safe, loving environment that allows everyone to grow to her or his fullest potential.

Jessica Tumey, Harrison County

In this line of work, even though each day brings new challenges, much still remains the same. It is difficult to detail each task that a social worker must complete in a day's time, and often the necessary tasks cannot be completed in one day's time. A cabinet social worker must try to be organized.

Because the community sometimes views us in a negative light, we must try to improve and maintain good public relations. Social work is sometimes an emotionally difficult and time-consuming job, but it is also rewarding in so many ways.

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Tina Fryman, Nicholas County

It's important that workers remember that no matter what the circumstances, families are families. We need to keep in mind how important attachment and bonding are with the family. I think we sometimes get caught up in the moment of the job and forget to slow down and take into account how our actions are going to affect the family. We need to be considerate of their feelings and emotions.

Skills develop over time, but when dealing with families, I try to be as real as possible and use active listening and feedback. I write my notes so the family can see what I'm writing and won't feel defenseless or wonder what I'm writing. To make them feel comfortable, I try to be as down-to-earth and on their level as possible.

Susan Malone, Harrison County

One of the greatest rewards is that we are making a difference in people's lives. The family may not tell us, but we can see their progress and strength and determination to overcome their issues. Each family offers us a different learning experience, and we need to be grateful to them for making us feel successful.



They may tell us with a smile or a simple thank you. It may not be today or tomorrow, but years from now. We do make a difference, and this is the best reward for doing what we do.

Lori Dillow, Boyd County

The most important skill that I have learned in my 10 years of human service work, especially the past six years working in child protection, is that I have to treat all clients with dignity and respect throughout all aspects of a case.

As social workers we do not approve of child abuse or neglect by parents. However, if we are able to treat the parents as human beings, they may come back in the future with problems or questions they are having at that time.

For example, I was assigned a termination of parental rights (TPR) case during my first week in child protective services. The mother maintained only sporadic contact with me and her children. Ultimately she did not show up for the TPR hearing, and her five children were released for adoption.

Since the TPR hearing, she has had two more children. After both deliveries, she called to tell me she delivered and invited me to visit and play with her babies. She told me she appreciated that I was nice and never talked down to her.

Those visits confirmed for me that relationship building can result in positive outcomes – even if it takes a few years. Because of my initial interactions with the mother, she remembered and voluntarily reached out to me for encouragement and support.

Katie Hancock, Mercer County

The greatest reward with this job is centered on the children. Whether it is a successful reunification or a successful adoption, all that really matters at the end of the day is that some of my kids are better off after my involvement in their lives. It is those precious moments when you know you have made a positive difference that gets you through the bad parts of the job and keeps you coming back every day.

Michaelle Johnson, Butler County

I am the recruitment and certification contact for Butler and Edmonson counties in the Barren River Region. I love my job and really enjoy working with foster and adoptive parents.

Doing adoptions is the most rewarding part of my job. A lot of our resource parents are unable to have children and, for that reason, get involved in foster care/adoption. They want to provide loving, safe, nurturing homes for our children. I like seeing children wanting and waiting for their forever families and then watching it really happen.

We have great resource parents, and attending an adoption hearing is the best part of my job. Our circuit court judge said that adoption hearings are his favorite as well.

It is great to witness a family develop in front of our eyes.

Dawn Slye, Mercer County

Since I'm an intake and investigations worker, I feel that one of the greatest rewards of my job is knowing that I've taken a child out of an abusive or severely neglectful environment -- and that I may very well have saved a life. Even though the things I have to see are so often heartbreaking and many of the clients I work with are often angry, I help the kids, and that's what counts.



Lorinda Penny, Green River Region

There is always something to learn no matter how long you have been on the job. I am an old "war horse" with the cabinet and after almost 27 years still love the job I do. The important lessons and skills I have learned on the job are too numerous to discuss, but here are a few that are special to me:

- Always look for the strengths in the family.

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- Realize you cannot give others your strengths, so help them develop their own.
- Keep in mind how you would want to be treated if the roles were reversed.
- You can be kind and firm at the same time.
- You continually have the opportunity to model a different way of dealing with life's difficulties.
- Be accountable and admit when you are mistaken.
- Listen and hear what the other person is saying.
- Each individual is important and unique and is here for a reason.
- Speak the truth even if it is not popular.
- A good supervisor is worth her or his weight in gold.
- Remember you are not God.
- Respect the position, even if you do not respect the person.

Dana L. Simmons, KIPDA Service Region

I do not believe there is a "typical day" for a cabinet social worker. The job is very unpredictable, fast-paced at times, and the responsibilities are ever increasing and changing. Just when you think you have the hang of things, everything changes and there you go again, trying to adapt to a new way of doing things while maintaining numbers and percentages at an acceptable level.

The most important lessons I have learned as a cabinet social worker are to always remember that people are not their problems and, therefore, should not be treated as such (always remember the golden rule). Keep going no matter how far behind you may get, and things will eventually get accomplished. And the cause for which we do what we do is well worth it when a life is improved and affected in a positive way.

The greatest rewards of my job are the brief moments when I am allowed to enter people's lives and share their triumphs over opposition, their accomplishments of dreams, and their joys at overcoming trials.

CHFS Focus Program Spotlight: Students, CHFS get together with a little help from the WWW

The Cabinet for Health and Family Services took its message about the obesity epidemic to Scott County this week at the invitation of a group of fifth graders.



Students in Leslie Robertson's social studies class at Anne Mason Elementary School chose childhood obesity as their

Project Citizen topic. Project Citizen is a program of the Center for Civic Education that teaches students how to monitor and influence public policy.

The class was divided into groups and each group was assigned to tackle one aspect of the issue of childhood obesity. The group assigned to identify and explain the problem searched the Internet for information and found their way to the CHFS Web site.

"We sent an email asking for information but we didn't think anyone would answer us," said Bailey Gilkerson, 10. Their email made its way to the Division of Communications where it was forwarded to the Department for Public Health Nutrition Services Branch and on to the CDC Obesity Grant Program. By the next day, Elaine Russell with the obesity grant program was scheduled to visit the class to provide information and answer questions about obesity.

In the meantime, Communications directed the class to a Web site where they could read the cabinet's 2004 report on obesity.

"We got a lot of good information we'll be able to use" for the class entry in the statewide Project Citizen showcase in May, said Cori Weir, 11.

In addition to Bailey and Cori, Deone Fields, 11, Bryant Wren, 11½ and Ashleigh Adkins, 11 are members of the group that contacted the cabinet.

The class prepared for Russell's visit by discussing information in the obesity report and developing questions to ask.

Russell explained that most aspects of body shape and size are genetic and can't be controlled, but we can all make choices and adopt behaviors that can influence our weight and overall health.

Russell said talking about obesity and nutrition with children is different than talking with adults.

"When talking about obesity and weight control with kids it is important to stress that their bodies are still growing and they need enough wholesome, nutritious foods to fuel their bodies' needs versus restricting foods," she said. She stressed to students the importance of finding physical activities they enjoy and setting goals to be healthy, not to be thin.

Students assigned to develop solutions to the obesity problem shared some of their ideas with Russell – many of which were remarkably sophisticated and thoughtful.

"They are particularly sensitive to their overweight classmates," Robertson said. "They suggested a number of ideas to make sure overweight children aren't embarrassed

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or made to feel different while trying to eat healthier and get more exercise.”

The class also was eager to find out what the state is doing about childhood obesity and what other schools in Kentucky are doing.

“I was impressed that they took such interest in this issue and have already formed a club to help people feel positive about their weight and help improve their health,” Russell said.

Secretary Holsinger touts legislative success, wellness activity at forums

By Anya Armes Weber

About 1,000 Frankfort staff attended the first quarterly Secretary's Forums of 2005 this week and heard from Secretary James Holsinger and leadership staff about current events relating to the cabinet.



Holsinger kicked off the session with a review of his three principles, thanked staff for their hard work and encouraged all to keep focused on striving to improve the quality of our services to customers.

“We are here to make a difference in the lives of 4 million Kentuckians,” he said. “We always want to do it better. I’ve been managing for 30 years, and I still don’t know how to do it; I just keep trying to do it better. Each of us has that ability. We can do what we do a little better each time.”

Holsinger mentioned the cabinet’s “exceptional” legislative success in assisting the passage of bills relating to protecting senior citizens from physical abuse and financial exploitation, permanent funding for newborn screening, small business health insurance, healthy children and an electronic health network that gives medical professionals secure access to data wherever and whenever it is needed.

Deputy Secretary Delanor Manson addressed the cabinet’s Web efforts. The new Internet site launched Feb. 15 and is being improved consistently. Manson said internal and external focus groups will be forming soon to gather feedback on the sites from staff and customers. A new intranet site will launch in April.

The cabinet’s wellness efforts are moving forward, Holsinger said. Twenty-seven people applied for the

Wellness and Health Committee chairperson position, and the spot should be filled within three weeks.

Registration for the committee’s promotion, “Get Moving Kentucky! Get Moving CHFS!” began this week. Holsinger encouraged all staff in the CHR complex to sign up in teams of four to become healthier with daily activity.

“This is a prime opportunity for us to lead the way in physical health and overall well-being,” Holsinger said. “It’s necessary for adults not to become sedentary. Please join me in taking the first step to better health by signing up for the Get Moving Kentucky! Get Moving CHFS! physical activity program.”

Children and Family Services Undersecretary Eugene Foster discussed updates to DCBS services by comparing the “as is” model to the best services model.

“Much like Medicaid is being modernized, now it’s time for DCBS modernization,” he said. “With the help of a consultant, a six-month study will look at everything we do with clients from beginning to end of their involvement with us. We’ll come up with the optimal model for the best outcomes.”

Foster said the project will use modern business practices and technology.

“It’s a big undertaking, but it can have a huge success,” he said. “We’ll be giving employees better tools to serve our customers.”

As for a cabinet dress code, that’s on hold, Holsinger said. “We’re expecting the Personnel Cabinet to issue a policy,” he said. “Until then, just keep coming to work dressed,” he joked.

Further information from the forums, including questions and answers from each session, will be posted online in the coming weeks. Stay tuned to the CHFS Focus for updates.

Letter from Governor Fletcher to employees

I want to thank you for your diligence in finding efficiencies to help us stretch tax dollars further and provide better services to the Commonwealth.

In addition, state employees have worked tirelessly to make this legislative session a successful one – through the passage of a budget, JOBS for Kentucky tax modernization and many other important initiatives.



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Two important components of the budget that passed last month are a 3 percent raise in Fiscal Year 2006 for state employees and a provision to provide up to a 20 percent increase in premium costs for health insurance to ensure you have the coverage you need while avoiding the possibility of increased out-of-pocket expenses.

The session resulted in many other positive results for our working families and our communities. Here are several of the ways you and many other Kentuckians will benefit.

JOBS for Kentucky

Tax modernization will let workers keep more of their hard-earned money and strengthen communities in many ways, including:

- ◆ An estimated 10,000 new jobs;
- ◆ An income tax cut for most working Kentuckians;
- ◆ Removal of almost 500,000 low-income family members off the tax rolls;
- ◆ A first-ever college tuition state tax credit, which provides a maximum credit of up to \$500 per student for any public or private college or university in Kentucky. An estimated 61,000 families are expected to qualify for the credit.
- ◆ Incentives for redevelopment of abandoned industrial sites, historic preservation, horse breeders and environmental efforts, which will stabilize, strengthen and preserve the unique heritage of our Commonwealth.

A budget that invests in our future

Tax modernization, strong fiscal management and an improving economy enable us to make additional investments in this budget, including:

- ◆ Education: Post-secondary education will receive an \$82 million – or 9 percent – increase in funding as well as important investments in infrastructure. K-12 education will receive a \$524 million increase – or 17 percent for fiscal year 2006 over 2004 funding.
- ◆ Medicaid: The largest increased investment in General Fund for Medicaid ever made during a two-year period will be achieved with an additional \$94 million in General Fund for fiscal year 2005 and \$164 million in fiscal year 2006.
- ◆ Transportation: Because good roads are essential to economic development and safety, the budget includes \$600 million for road projects.

This session also made important advancements in safety (legislation to crack down on manufacturing of meth, funding of additional drug courts and elder abuse legislation); the economy (the first-ever comprehensive

energy policy as well as several small business initiatives); health care (expanded newborn screening and e-health, which creates a statewide electronic health network); and education (Read to Achieve, which provides early intervention help for struggling readers).

Together, we can continue to make great strides to improve the future of the Commonwealth.

Sincerely,

Governor Ernie Fletcher

**Note: This letter will also appear in the April issue of the Communicate.*

CHFS Health Tip of the Week: March is counseling awareness month; KEAP is just a phone call away

By Anne Parr, R.N.

According to the American Counseling Association, problems involving marital, family, or emotional distress, alcoholism and drug abuse, and financial or medical issues can seriously diminish an individual's job performance. As a progressive employer, the Commonwealth of Kentucky recognizes that there are positive, workable solutions to many problems that trouble employees.



State employees and their dependents are eligible for Kentucky Employee Assistance Program (KEAP) services. There is no cost for its information or referral services. All contact with KEAP is confidential as required by state and federal law. Employee involvement with KEAP is permitted on state time with the supervisor's prior approval. Supervisors may refer employees to KEAP when job performance deteriorates, however participation is voluntary.

If you or your dependents could benefit from this assessment and referral service, call the KEAP office for more information. In Frankfort call 502-564-5788, or use the toll-free 1-800-445-KEAP number from anywhere in the state.

Kentucky State Police also have an Employee Assistance Program. They can be reached at 502-573-1719. Visit KEAP's website at:

<http://govnet.ky.gov/personnel/emphb/keap.htm> (Note: This link will open a new browser window and leave this site.)

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A Message from Secretary Holsinger: Get moving CHFS!

Hello! The first week of registration for "Get Moving Kentucky! Get Moving CHFS!" is coming to a close. Hundreds of you have expressed interest in joining this first activity, sponsored by the cabinet's Wellness and Health Promotion Program. Now it's time to make the commitment and complete the registration form available in the brochures on display in the CHR lobby. The key information on how each team can have fun and complete 420 miles, which is the total mile across Kentucky is contained in the brochure. The brochure is attached.



Anyone in the CHR building is encouraged to join the fun. But no one from the cabinet will be denied participation.

The big kickoff is at 10 a.m. Monday, April 11, in the health services auditorium, but you don't have to wait until then to get moving.

So get your team of four together, decide on a team name and return your forms to Joyce Jennings, 375 E. Main St., 3C-G. You have through next Friday, April 8, to sign up. **We strongly encourage you to submit your registration form ASAP.** Turn in your registration to Joyce today!

Remember, we are taking the lead for other state agencies to follow. Let's show them that the "health" in our cabinet name is more than the work we do, it's our way of life.

Governor Ernie Fletcher unveils new Medicaid KYHealth cards - Project will save the state more than \$1 million this year

At right: Governor Ernie Fletcher, Department for Medicaid Services Commissioner Shannon Turner and CHFS Secretary James Holsinger answer questions Monday about the new KyHealth Card. The new plastic cards look more like a health plan card than the current paper versions. The new card is part of Governor Fletcher's Medicaid modernization efforts and will save the state up to \$1.3 million this year.



On Mon., March 28 Governor Ernie Fletcher unveiled the new KyHealth Card that is expected to save the state up to \$1.3 million dollars in the next year.

By July 1, the plastic cards will become permanent replacements for the paper cards issued monthly to the more than 685,000 current Medicaid members. Every new Medicaid enrollee will receive the new card after July.

"The card will make their trips to the doctor more about healing care from a physician and less about paperwork and eligibility," Governor Fletcher said. "Our Medicaid members deserve the best possible care, and the providers they depend on will also reap the benefit of easier access to information about patients."

Governor Fletcher was joined by Cabinet for Health and Family Services Secretary James W. Holsinger and other officials from the cabinet, the state agency that determines Medicaid eligibility and helps pay for services.

The state's savings will come from eliminating or reducing the cost of staff time, postage and paper in mailing paper cards to households every month. The KYHealth Card is part of Governor Fletcher's Medicaid Modernization efforts, working to bring the Medicaid program into the 21st century.

"Eliminating monthly issuances of paper cards reduces the risk of fraud and may even stop the abuse by some recipients of Medicaid's already stressed pharmacy benefits program," Governor Fletcher said.

Currently, the monthly issued paper cards list every Medicaid member in one household.

"It's inefficient to expect a family of multiple recipients to share one card," Dr. Holsinger said. "When family members travel, who gets the card?"

The KyHealth Card will be used for visits to the doctor, pharmacy, hospital or anywhere else a person receives medical care. This card should be used as long as a person receives medical assistance from the Kentucky Medicaid program. The permanent card will remain current through any address changes.

"The most important thing members should remember about the card is to not throw it away at the end of each month or if they lose Medicaid eligibility. If they become eligible at a later date, they can use the same plastic card," Dr. Holsinger said. "It's well worth the adjustment for the money and time we're saving staff, providers and especially Medicaid members."

The card rollout will take place in three phases. About 124,000 people in Fayette, Jefferson and Clay counties will receive their cards beginning April 18. Beginning May 16, almost 259,000 Eastern and Central Kentuckians will

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get their cards. And about 282,000 people in Southern and Western Kentucky will receive their cards beginning June 17.

Members will be alerted to the change in a notice accompanying the card. As the rollout progresses, the cabinet will remind members of the change through local media, with posters at Department for Community Based Services (DCBS) offices and local health departments and information posted on Medicaid's Web site.

EDS, a Texas-based business and technology company, was awarded the contract to produce and mail the cards by the state Department for Medicaid Services. The group will offer the cabinet technical support and weekly status reports on card issuance.

Medicaid providers in two counties - Clay and Fayette - have already heralded the ease of use from their involvement in the card's pilot launch last July.

"The card's magnetic strip is encoded in order to access a patient's up-to-date eligibility and medical information. A simple 'swipe' through a card reader calls up this information, or providers have online and toll-free phone access 24 hours a day, every day. As a physician, I'd say that's something that any medical care provider can appreciate," Governor Fletcher added.

Starting this month, Medicaid providers across the state will be invited to 25 regional training sessions and will also view training materials online to learn how to use the swipe and online systems. Providers can visit www.chfs.ky.gov/dms/kyhealthcard.htm to find out about training sessions in their area.

The KyHealth Card features the new "Kentucky: Unbridled Spirit" state brand, making the card release the largest mass distribution of the brand to date.

"As this administration stands by our commitment to eliminating waste and promoting efficiency, we again celebrate the spirit of change that's improving the quality of life for all Kentuckians," Governor Fletcher said.

Ten-Ure Convention information available online

The annual Ten-Ure Conference "54 And Striving for More" will be held May 18 - 20 at the Executive West Hotel in Louisville. Convention information is on the Ten-Ure Web site at www.ten-Ure.org.

For more information, contact Teresa Proffitt at Teresa.Proffitt@ky.gov.

Set clocks forward this weekend

By Anya Armes Weber



It's almost time to "spring forward"

Daylight-saving time begins at 2 a.m. Sunday, April 3 – the first Sunday of the month. So remember to move your clocks forward one hour before you go to bed Saturday night.

Check your smoke detectors this weekend, too. Fire safety experts recommend that you change the batteries in each of your home's smoke detectors now.

Employee Enrichment

By Anya Armes Weber



Employee Enrichment is a weekly feature for CHFS staff. These tips for making work better focus on team building, customer service and personal development.

You have probably heard that there is no such thing as a stupid question. But some questions are better than others. A good question analyzes, compares and contrasts, interprets and makes connections between pieces of information. When you analyze information to be asked in a question, you break down what you know into smaller parts. Comparing and contrasting information is the process of looking for similarities and differences.

Create a good question by first asking yourself what you need to learn, why the subject is important and how you can use the information. Then use the "what, why, how" model to form the basis of your question. "What" questions may ask for further explanation. "Why" questions could let the presenter give an opinion or analysis. And "how" questions may provide you with an example to better understand the issue.

This week's Secretary's Forums gave staff a good opportunity to ask questions of CHFS leadership. Brush up on your question skills at next quarter's forums and join in the conversation.